Speech at the Capital on February 28, 2007

Public Health Committee

I'd like to begin with two quotes, one by Albert Einstein, the other by Dr. Bernie Siegel.

What is a miracle?

"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." Albert Einstein

"While I was reading the other night, I came across this question: "What is a miracle?" It made me think of the things in our lives that my mother called "God's Redirections." She used this term for the seemingly random incidents that affect our lives in a positive way.

Maybe it is the person you happen to meet, what you accidentally pick up and read the help that comes unexpectedly from strangers, or one of a million possibilities that bring miracles to our lives. Perhaps these seemingly random incidents are more then they appear to be. Perhaps these are the real miracles! We just need to realize the potential for miracles is present at all times." Dr. Bernie Siegel

Like Mike said, we are here today to talk about the importance of AED's in recreation centers and in health facilities. On August 24th my healthy 17 year old son went into cardiac arrest at the Wallingford Recreation Center. My son was a coach at the camp and he was sitting on the bleachers next to his best friend watching his younger brother referee a game. He simply slumped over onto the floor. At first, everyone thought he was picking something up under the bleachers. Within seconds they realized

they were wrong, ushered all the children out of the gym, got the director, the trainer and my husband who was running the camp. Mike turned blue. The trainer froze and did not begin CPR. There was no AED on site. The head of the recreation center called 911, but did not make it clear how critical the emergency was. A volunteer EMT working next store ran to the recreation center thinking someone may have broken a bone. As he entered the recreation center and ran into the gym, he found my son, very discolored on the floor. He immediately began CPR. Our hero is Bob Huebner. He did three sets of 30 compressions to two breaths prior to the ambulance arriving. Bob saved Mike's life and his brain. The EMT staff was outstanding. They immediately defibrillated Mike. The AED recorded an initial rhythm at 11:12:23 seconds, the paddles were immediately put on Mike and he was shocked at 11:13:52 seconds. You could see he began breathing, but his EKG was very abnormal. He was put on a ventilator and completely unresponsive. If not for the quick reaction from Bob and the EMT staff, Mike would not be here today. This may sound strange, but we were blessed that day. Everything worked without flaw. The expertise of these individuals was amazing. They were cool, calm and collected throughout this intensive emergency. They were well trained and had obviously fine tuned their skill.

As you can see, Mike is doing extremely well. He spent fourteen days in intensive care, and know has an implanted defibrillator, lives on two heart pills a day and has a condition known as Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy. Today, Mike is ranked 16th in his class, he has been in the Honor Society for 3 years, is a spokesperson for the American Heart Association and is attending Quinnipiac University in the fall.

Today we are here to emphasize the importance of AED's. "An AED is a computerized defibrillator that can: 1) interpret the victim's heart rhythm, 2) differentiate rhythms that require a shock from rhythms that do not require a shock and 3) guides the rescuer through the procedure of shocking the victim by the use of a voice message and visual prompts." (Acompora) The American Heart Associations Chain of Survival is Call 911, CPR, Defibrillation, and Advanced Care. Presently, I'd like to focus on Defibrillation.

Defibrillators are considered "dummy proof" now. Years ago if you misused one it could potentially cost the victim their life. Today, the defibrillator talks to you. They are very safe to use as long as you have the proper training. The amazing truth is that teachers, students and other lay rescuers at the scene of an emergency can safely provide this link in the American Heart Association's chain of survival. Lay rescuers can be trained in CPR and the use of an AED in as little as four hours. I'm happy to report that I spoke to the Board of Education on January 22, 2007 in Wallingford and they okayed one more defibrillator in each high school, one for each of our two middle schools, and one for each of our eight elementary schools. This includes training.

Early defibrillation is the single greatest determinate of survival from sudden cardiac arrest.

When defibrillation is delivered in one minute, the reported survival rate can be as high as 90%. If defibrillation is delivered in less than five minutes, survival can be as high as 50%. Every minute without defibrillation the odds of survival drops 7 to 10%.

- > Approximately 325,000 people die per year from sudden cardiac arrest.
- > That is more than 890 Americans each day.
- > Approximately 3,000 children and young adults die per year due to sudden cardiac death.
- > It is the leading cause of death in young athletes.
- > Every 26 seconds someone experiences cardiac arrest and every minute someone dies.
- > Heart disease is the number one cause of death in the United States.

Mike was blessed on August 24th. Let's work together to make sure we prevent any unnecessary deaths due to cardiac arrest by having defibrillators placed in all recreation facilities and health facilities. There was a one in a million chance that Mike would survive and he did. Is it worth taking this chance with our Connecticut residents?

Thank you for your time.

Joan Papale, Wallingford

